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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe a positive supervisory experience from the supervisor's point of view. Four field interviews with supervisors responsible for training and evaluating professionals were subjected to phenomenological content analysis. Unlike the methods of experimental science, phenomenological analysis seeks to determine the meaning of experience for the participant rather than to describe the relationships among the variables in behavior as observed by nonparticipants. Analysis of the interviews revealed their essential themes, which were then integrated into a description of the fundamental structure of the positive supervisory experience. The results indicate that supervision focuses on resolution of those conflicts affecting a supervisee's acquisition of or improvement in a professional role. The supervisor resolves the conflicts by structuring the experience so that congruent perceptions of the supervisee's problems emerge. As the supervisee experiences success, the focus of supervision shifts to examination of more personal conflicts; the supervisee governs the rate of disclosure. The supervisor controls the depth of his or her involvement in this personal exploration. Learning and growth are evident in both the supervisor and the supervisee as conflicts over ending the relationship are resolved. (Author/PGD)

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THE MEANING AND STRUCTURE OF A POSITIVE SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE FROM A SUPERVISOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the meaning of supervisor's perceptions of a positive supervisory experience. Unlike most research in supervision which focuses on specific variables related to the outcomes of supervision, this study seeks to describe the constellation of meanings inherent in the experience of positive supervision. A phenomenological methodology, with its emphasis on fidelity to experience and description of fundamental meanings, is appropriate to the content of this research and to the present stage of inquiry into supervision. An extensive review of the literature on supervision in the fields of education counseling, social work and psychotherapy is the basis for this study.

Field interviews were conducted with two educational administrators, one social worker and one counselor; all had responsibility for training and evaluating professionals. The interviews were analyzed using a phenomenological content analysis procedure involving careful reflection in order to reduce the data into its essential themes. These themes were integrated into a description of the fundamental structure of supervisor's experiences in positive supervision.

Results indicate that resolution of a supervisee's conflicts in acquiring or improving a professional role is the focus of supervision. Conflicts are resolved by the supervisor initially structuring the experience so that congruent perceptions about supervisee's problems emerge. As the supervisee experiences success, the focus of supervision shifts to examining more personal conflicts; the supervisee governs the rate of disclosure. The supervisor controls the depth of his/her involvement in this personal exploration. Learning and growth are evident in both supervisor and supervisee as conflicts over ending the relationship are resolved.

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Introduction

Recent research in supervision in the helping professions of education, counseling, social work, and psychotherapy indicate similarities of the supervisory goals and theories in those fields (Clouse, 1977; Fitch, 1976; Herrick, 1977; Horgan, 1971; Metzler & Kell, 1972; Rutenberg, 1974; Squires, 1978; Wilson, Byar, Shapiro & Schell, 1969). While theoretical works in the field of supervision has made great strides, the experimental research to support theory building has yielded little information (Alfonso, Firth & Neville, 1975; Cogan, 1973; DeBell, 1963, Dussault, 1970, Eckstein & Wallerstein, 1958; Hansen & Warner, 1971; Horgan, 1971; Pettes, 1967, Rutenberg, 1974; Zonca, 1972). Cogan (1973) suggests that experimental paradigms be abandoned for the time being, in favor of forming a descriptive data base in the field of supervision.

Giorgi (1966) bolsters this argument by pointing out the difficulty of obtaining an adequate description of phenomena through experimentation. Experimental paradigms, according to Giorgi, do not allow for the effects of subjects' knowledge, as emphasis is placed on empirical, reductionistic and quantitative data collection, which highlights behavior rather than cognition.

This study then begins building a descriptive data base for the field of supervision. Providing a description of a positive supervisory experience from the supervisor's perspective is the purpose of this study. A phenomenological methodology is appropriate for the study's purpose of providing a rigorous description of the structure of positive supervision.

> Phenomenological explanation does not fit the conception of experimental science that holds that basic information is gathered by the manipulation of one or more independent variables related to a given dependent variable, all of which are clearly observable. Instead, phenomenology emphasizes direct experience, what it means to the one who experiences, and what he/she communicates of this experience to others. This process is, of course, a much more difficult task than what the traditional scientist has to communicate, but it offers something beyond the realm of independent-dependent or input-output variables.

> When an individual experiences the color red, the love of another person, triumph, triangularity, or orgasm, his direct experience of them is immediately meaningful, and this meaning is separate from knowledge about these phenomena .... Let it suffice at this point to indicate that fictional literature, art in general, and certain kinds of psychologically oriented descriptions are examples of phenomenological explanation. That is, description of the variety of direct experience possible for human beings is a source of information and insight that is not the same as that provided by predictive or theoretical explanations (Lana, 1976, p. 1).

The choice of phenomenological methodology is based on two assumptions. The first asserts that

> there is structure underlying all human behavior and mental functioning, and ... that this structure can be discovered through orderly analysis, that has cohesiveness and meaning, and that structures have generality (Gardner, 1973, p. 10).

This assumption, Gardner explains, underlies the work of Piaget, Levi-Strauss, and Freud as each was seeking a structure to explain the cognitions of humans.

The second assumption reveals a "constructivist" approach to the study of human subjects.

> Subjects being studied must at a minimum be considered to be knowing beings, and that this knowledge they possess has important consequences for how behavior or actions are interpreted (Magoon, 1977, p. 651-652).

More information about assumptions of "constructivist" research are given in Sullivan, 1980. To study the structure of supervision then is to study how the persons perceive supervision by a method which utilizes these perceptions. It is assumed that the experience of supervision from a supervisee's and a supervisor's viewpoint, while differing in content matter across professional fields, maintains a similar structure of processes and relationships across experiences. It is this structure which the phenomenological seeks to describe.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first part describes the philosophical basis for phenomenology. The second part outlines the design

of the study. The third part presents the results. The fourth part compares the results to the existing literature in supervision in the fields of education, counseling, social work, and psychotherapy.

Philosophical Basic of the Phenomenological Method

"Phenomena is the general label we apply to what is immediately known in consciousness" (Lana, 1976, p. 60). The key phase is "immediately known". By immediately known, the phenomenologist is referring to the fact that the sensations or perceptions are apprehended by the senses. When I am in a room, for example the restaurant where I have coffee in the morning, I occupy a particular space, a particular perspective in that room, from which I apprehend the rest of the room. I immediately apprehend my situation in the room before I have time to think that there are windows on my left and the door is straight ahead. I know that that is where the windows and doors are before I can verbalize or abstract their position in relation to one another. To think about the room in terms of windows on my left and the door straight ahead is to have abstracted certain characteristics of the phenomena like "windows" as framed glass designating the inside and outside of this building or "straight ahead" as in front of and away from the particular position which I occupy. Consciousness then is immediately known sense impressions, not abstractions made on those immediate sense impressions. These immediately known sense impressions, the phenomena, "(go) beneath abstraction" (Lana, 1976, p. 61).

Phenomenologists do not conceptualize perceptions as passive. Perception is an active construction of the world. "Perceptual phenomena are not constructed by the passive reception of content of the external world; rather the external world is constructed by the perceptual phenomena" (Lana p. 67). To return to the restaurant, I see the windows because my perceptual senses are able to construct the image of a window. I could not inactively construct the phenomena just as I could not avoid hearing a rock band if I were in the first row of a concert. Perception then is an active construction of the world. "The sensory apparatus is not a conducter, but is part of the central processes that in turn can only be understood as

participating in the constitution of reality by the subject" (Lana, p. 67). Herrick (1977) used the word co-constitution to define the relationship between the phenomena of the world and persons-in-the-world. Co-constitution is,

> The interrelationshop of person and the world in which a person has no independent existence apart from the world, and the world has no independent existence apart from persons. However, neither is viewed as the cause or creator of the other (p. 10).

The human body as the apprehender of the world then is a central concept in phenomenology. The reality of the body and the reality of the world are the same; they co-constitute each other through the primacy of perceptions.

> It is easy to see that "my" body is the transition from "me" to my world, that it grafts me on the realm of things and secures for me a solid or shaky standpoint in the world. My hands allow me to grasp the world in a certain way, different than if I had only one finger on each hand; my feet help me walk on the world in a certain way, different than if I had webbed feet or wings (Luijpen and Koren, 1969, p. 36).

The body involves me in the world and I know the world through my body. I am then a "conscious-being-in-the-world." The hyphens are used to indicate the inseparability of the body and the world the body perceives. When I die, my body is no longer sensate, I am no longer a being-in-the-world, as the world can only be known through the body. I cannot then think of the world as separate from, or removed from my body which perceives the world, for the only way I can know the world is through my body, through my perceptions. The world as an objective reality cannot exist. Existence, or being-conscious-in-the-world is the essence of humaness.

> Being-conscious-in-the-world is that by which man is man, and not a thing, a pure spirit of God...Because man is essentially a conscious-being-in-the-world, man does not enter the world because there happens to be a world. He cannot withdraw from the world and remain man. A complete withdrawal from the world is possible only by death -- the end of man as man (Luijpen and Koren, p. 39).

Humans cannot be separated from the world. There is no dualism of subjective and objective reality. The world is not an "objective reality" because the world only exists because humans perceive it. To think of a world without humans is an impossibility because knowledge of the world can only come through the senses, through human existence. Yet, the human existence cannot be separated from the world, as humans exist through the apprehension of the world. If humans did not apprehend the world, they would not exist, as apprehension defines human existence in the world. A circle is not without a line to circumscribe it, just as existence is not without the world.

Another way to think about this unity of world and consciousness, and of subject and objects, is to create a creature from outer space called XYL who can only sense radar and radio waves, but is blind to light and other sensations as we as humans know them. XYL's perception of the world would be different because its reality would be apprenhended differently. XYL would sense airports differently from the way humans sense airports. Night and day would be different for XYL than for humans as XYL apprehends different phenomena. It would be impossible then for XYL to know what the human world means, just as it is impossible for humans to know the meaning of XYL's world. For example, would airports be stimulating for XYL? Would day be more or less depressing than nights? Would cars with CB radios be considered cute? We don't know; we could never know because we could never apprehend the world as XYL does. The mutual presence of the world and self, of being-conscious-in-the-world makes existence and the world "radically human."

If being-in-the-world for XYL is different from being-in-the-world for humans, then it follows that there are many human worlds, corresponding to the many attitudes and standpoints of existent subjects. "The meaning of the world differs according(ly) as the subject-in-the-world occupies a different standpoint" (Luijpen and Køren, p. 45). My being-in-the-world, as a student, a father, a husband, a supervisor, is different from others being-in-the-world as a professor, a tradesman, a pool player. "The world

is a system of meanings. All "being", then is per se meaning, being-for-a-subject, and meaning arises with man" (Luijpen and Koren, p. 41). Let's return to the space creature to illustrate this point. We know the creature perceives radio and radar. Yet our speculation on what its perceptions mean -- do radar stations make it happy? -- results in nonsense. The meaning of the world arises with humans, with their unique capabilities in apprehending the world. Meaning to a human is different than meaning is for XYL. Meaning proceeds from being-consious-in-the-world. And perceptions are the foundation of meaning.

Meaning is based on being-conscious-in-the-world; "the world of perception is discovered as the cradle of significations, the meaning of all meanings, the ground of all thoughts" (Thevenay, 1962, p. 88). However, meaning yields abstraction. Humans not only are present to the phenomena of the world, but also impute meaning to the phenomena. I make sense of the world as I am able to abstract a constellation of meanings from the phenomena of the world. I can differentiate the figure from the horizon, the apple from the bowl of fruit. I can be conscious of myself as a being-in-the-world. I can reflect and can therefore abstract. Meaning then is a synthesis of the world and the reflective human subject.

> The immediate presence of the world to me, and of me to it, is a marvelous synthesis of meanings from temporal, spatial, interpersonal, abstract, visual, tactile horizons, organized around a behavioral purpose that is basic to my lived experience (Keen, 1975, p. 81).

I will return to the restaurant where I have coffee every morning for a partial description of the meaning of my lived experience there. I describe this experience in terms of various "horizons" or contexts. The phenomena of the restaurant, my experience of being-in-the-restaurant, is meaningful against the backdrop of who I am. "This backdrop, or horizon, is not usually the focus of our attention, yet it is clearly decisive for what things mean to us" (Keen, 1975, p. 19-20). The windows to my left, the door ahead, the blue formica tables, the imitation wood paneling, the cup of steaming coffee, the notes I have in front of me, the couple

who always takes breakfast two booths in front, and my green bag sitting on the seat next to me, all present the spatial horizons of an orderly whole. These spatial horizons, although analytically separated here, merge with temporal horizons. It is in the restaurant that I begin my day; it is here I anticipate and plan what I will write when I reach the library after finishing my coffee. But the restaurant also calls up my days as a teacher and the noisy, smokey, windowless teachers' lounge next to the clanking cafeteria where I also took my morning coffee, and wished I could take it elsewhere. Further, I wonder about the future and where I'll take my coffee next year. My lived experience is a synthesizing of these spatial and temporal horizons into a meaningful field. "A field is a perceptual space, present right now, already meaningful, with layers of meaning, integrating multiple horizons into a coherent present moment of being-in-the-world" (Keen, 1975, p. 22).

The layers of meaning, the integration of multiple horizons, give structure to the field. Experience then is always structured; the integration of many meanings inherent in perception are an experience's structure. If I am sitting by the embers of a fire and hand you a poker and a log of wood, you will probably put the log on the grate and push it toward the embers with the poker. These aspects are immediately understandable because we both have a structure of mearings which allows the actions to take place. I would be surprised if you picked up the poker and beat my children, or balanced the log on your head, or jumped into the fire yourself. The expectations I have of you are known to you, and you know I have those expectations. Those expectations are derived from the particular structure of meanings we share that logs burn, that pokers are used in fire building, that you know a log will rekindle the fire, that my handing you the poker and the log means that I expect you to push the log on the fire, that you know how to clasp the poker, that the poker is a tool handled by the hands rather than the mouth, that the fire is hot and so a poker is necessary to push the log. Other meanings not mentioned here are also part of the structure which allow the action to make sense to us both. The same act

would have a different meaning if the house in which we were sitting were suddenly invaded by a pack of ravenous wolves. Further, if you had never seen a poker before, the structure of meaning inherent in the situation would be different for you.

Our experience of being-in-the-world is unique, but it is not so unique that we are alone. We know that there are others whose structure of being-in-the-world is similar to our own. "The world is common to us, even as our perspectives on it differ and make us different people" (Keen, 1975, p. 108). The structure of the world which is common to us is the world which the phenomenological method seeks to describe.

Thus, the phenomenological approach is characterized by an openness to the phenomena. Both the subject and the observer attempt to apprehend the phenomena as completely as possible as it is experienced without prejudging or consciously relating the experience to an abstract conceptual framework. Thus, there is a fidelity to the phenomena as lived. The context of the phenomena is important for proscribing the meaning of the phenomena; the meaning of the phenomena is relevant only within the context. Both hold importance for revealing the phenomena more completely than it is revealed in ordinary experience (Keen, 1975, p. 41-42).

Design of the Study

The method of phenomenology essentially involves the process of intuition, reflection and description (Giorgi, 1965, p. 231-232). The methodology allows the researcher to first concentrate on what is experienced. The researcher must determine the subject's perception of the context endeavoring fully to understand and explore those meanings. The researcher maintains an openness to whatever the subject has to say. This idea is best captured by Rogers (1969, p. 111) in his concepts of active listening and empathic understanding. During the second phase of the study and after the data is collected, the researcher reflects on the data, letting the themes (the structure) emerge from the complete description of the phenomena. In this manner, the researcher allows the themes to emerge from the data

rather than selecting those aspects which can be manipulated, or defining the phenomenon in terms of those manipulations. However, as Hagan (1971) concluded, one must fit the methodology to the problem at hand.

> Various methodological procedures must be tried out and then evaluated as to whether they helped or hindered in an attempt to come to a fuller description of the essential structure of a phenomenon. Thus, one must look critically upon his/her research method and be willing to alter it at any point if it becomes evident that his procedures are leading him away from the phenomenon. The consistency lies in the constant pursuit of the phenomenon rather than in some kind of obsession with exact and never changing procedures (p. 38).

These steps were followed in the present study of supervision: examining one's presuppositions about the phenomena, selecting subjects, conducting the interviews and data analysis which consisted of reading the protocols, extracting significant statements, formulating meanings, perception check with subjects, organizing clusters of themes, condensing an exhaustive description and identifying of the fundamental structure. This research design follows many of the suggestions of Colaizzi (1978) and Herrick (1977). The steps in the research are described more fully below.

Preliminary Steps

Colaizzi (1978) states that the first essential step in doing a phenomenological study is for the researcher to examine his/her presuppositions about the topic. This step is essential as it helps make explicit those particular biases of the researcher. This procedure has been used by others. For example, Herrick (1977) in her study of positive and negative supervision from the supervisor's viewpoint, includes her presuppositions about supervision and about the nature of human beings and their experience. My presuppositions about supervision are deleted here due to space contraints. They can be found in Squires (1978).

Selection of Subjects

According to Colaizzi (1978), "Experience with the investigated topic and articulateness suffice as criteria for selecting subjects."

The subjects were chosen from a personal acquaintance of the subjects' knowledge about supervision and their articulateness. Four subjects were used: two are educational administrators whose duties encompass instructional supervision, one is a supervisor in a university department of counselor education and the last is a social worker who supervised novice group leaders. All had had post-masters training and had done supervision as part of their professional work. Each interview began with, "I'd like you to recall a positive supervisory experience and describe it in as much detail as possible." I was careful to encourage the subjects to express themselves in language that would reveal as much about the experience as possible. I asked questions for clarification when I was not sure what the subject was saying, or how the reported experience related to the positive aspects of the experience. Additionally, I encouraged the subject to recall as many of the specifics of the experience as possible.

When the subject had exhausted his/her recall of the experience, I then asked about other aspects of supervision which were present in the literature or were part of my own ideas about supervision. Specifically, I asked questions about the context of supervision, the positive supervisory relationship, the subject's organization, the feelings experienced during supervision and the conflict and growth which were evident in the supervisory process and relationship. I then asked if there was anything that was missing in the description of the positive supervisory experience. The interview ended when the subject replied negatively.

Analysis of the Data

The analysis is based on the transcribed tapes from the interviews. A tapescript, called a protocol, was typed and edited, to remove meaningless verbiage. Phrases and names were changed to maintain the confidentiality of the subjects. The following method, adapted from Colaizzi (1978) and Herrick (1977), was used to analyze the data.

Step 1 - Read Protocols. I transcribed and read all protocols thoroughly in order to acquire a feel for them and in order to make sense out of them.

Step 2 - Extract Significant Statements. Sentences and phrases which dealt directly with positive supervision as experienced from the supervisor's point of view were extracted. Statements which referred to very specific situations were transformed into more general formulations. This step involved two operations. The first was to identify the sentences or phases in the protocol which had significant meaning for the subject in terms of a positive supervisory experience. The second was to reword that piece of the protocol on a level of generality that transcended the specifics of the experience but did not become so abstract as to become meaningless. Additionally, the reworded statement had to be faithful to the meaning and intention of the subject. For example, for the supervisor mentioned in the Appendix, I decided that the subject's first speech did not contribute any significant statements. From the supervisor's second long speech on the next page, the only significant statement was, "The supervisor picked supervisees on the basis of specific criteria." The supervisor had originally listed four criteria; however, I reworded the statement on a more general level as the four specific criteria mentioned did not seem to hold importance for the positive supervisory experience, although the fact that criteria were employed did. Two questions, then, must be answered for each part of the protocol: 1) Is there a statement that is significant in revealing the experience? and 2) What wording will preserve the meaning of the statement while transcending the specifics of the experience? The answers to these two questions depend on the emerging conceptions I have about supervision, my own being-in-the-world and my own understanding of the subject's meanings. The validity of this step can be determined by the subject's judgement (see Step 4).

Step 3 - Formulate Meanings. The significant statements of Step 2, where appropriate, were combined together, again maintaining an adequate level of generality and preserving the meaning by referring the statements back to the original protocol. Additionally, the statements were reordered and grouped so as to give a sense of the sequence of the unfolding supervisory experience, and as a preliminary organization for Step 5, where clusters of

themes are identified. Both Steps 2 and 3, according to Colaizzi (1978) involve creative insight on the researcher's part to "leap" from what the subjects say to what they mean:

> This is a precarious leap because, while moving beyond the protocol statements, the meanings he arrives at and formulates should never sever all connection with the original protocols; his formulations must discover and illuminate those meanings hidden in the various contexts and horizons of the investigated phenomenon which are announced in the original protocols.

Step 4 - Perception Check with Subjects. The protocol and the results of Steps 2 and 3 were returned to the subjects to determine whether significant aspects had been deleted from the subjects' experience or additional meanings were imposed on the data which were not intended by the subject. Further, the subjects checked to see if confidentiality had been maintained. Then, corrections, alterations, and/or deletions were made which the subjects proposed.

Step 5 - Organize Clusters of Themes. The formulated meanings from all the protocols were merged into clusters of themes. The theme cluster was referred back to the original protocols to validate them. According to Colaizzi (1978), "The researcher must rely on his tolerance for ambiguity; he must proceed with the solid conviction that what is logically inexplicable may be existentially real and valid." The clusters of themes were organized by arranging the formulated meanings into groups that seemed to go together. Then each group was arranged under one of the three theme headings of the supervisory process, the supervisory relationship, and learning and growth. The three theme headings appeared to cover most of the groups of formulated meanings.

Step 6 - Exhaustive Description. From the results of the preceding steps, an exhaustive description was derived. The exhaustive description involved arranging the theme statements into an order which would reflect the temporal sequence of the experience. The theme statements were expanded where necessary to fully document the interrelationships of the theme statements and the formulated meanings. At times, the original

protocols were referred to in order that the meanings in the exhaustive description were adequately represented.

Step 7 - Identification of Fundamental Structure. The exhaustive description was reduced into a statement of identification of the fundamental structure. This step was accomplished through reflection on the themes contained in the exhaustive description as well as by referring back to previous steps in the procedure. This step involved combining and condensing the meanings of the exhaustive description. The fundamental structure, according to Herrick (1977) is "the essence of an experiential phenomenon as revealed through explication" (p. 10). Koen (1975) sees this essence as a unique combination of meanings.

Results

The result of a phenomenological investigation of this type is a description of the phenomenon being studied. A description of the fundamental structure of positive supervision from the supervisor's viewpoint is reported below.

Fundamental Structure of a Positive Supervisory Experience From the Supervisor's Point of View

In a positive supervisory experience, the supervisor is able to create a relaxed atmosphere through discussing the supervisee's expectations, previous history and his/her self-assessed needs and goals, thereby reducing both the supervisor's and supervisee's anxiety. The format for the task of supervision emerges from the discussion and from problems the supervisee has with the client(s) and with adopting a professional role. Initial resistance by the supervisee is broken down as the supervisee understands the task's format and intent, and congruent perceptions about problems, strategies and solutions are generated. Through the discussions, the supervisor reaches a positive acceptance of the supervisee's capabilities, intentions and intuitions.

The supervisor uses the congruence and/or incongruence of the supervisee's interpersonal dynamics in the supervisory relationship as an indication of the supervisee's interpersonal dynamics with the client(s). The supervisor shares these perceptions with the supervisee, who is free to accept or reject this and other interventions without fear of reprisal or failure. The supervisor accepts and values the supervisee's perceptions about these

problems without explicit judgement or manipulation, even though the supervisor may not agree with these perceptions. This comes about, in part, from the primary importance the supervisor places on communicating a sense of caring about the supervisee and in being honest.

Guidance for the supervisor's actions comes from previous positive and negative experience as a supervisee, from the supervisor's training, and from an empathetic identification with the supervisee. Thus, the supervisor initiates active interventions in areas where the supervisee needs help and is ready to learn. Also, the supervisor feels that listening to the supervisee facilitates change in the supervisee. The supervisor acts out a belief that the supervisory relationship is a model for the supervisee's relationship to the client(s).

Perceiving the supervisee-client problems as symptomatic of the supervisee's unresolved conflicts in acquiring a professional role and conflicts in the supervisee's personal life, the supervisor explores the supervisee's feelings, ideas and experiences around these issues. The supervisee is willing to accept this shift to a more personal level, which evidences trust in the supervisor. Personal and professional growth for both supervisor and supervisee evolve from this shift and foster a deepening of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Although the content of the sessions expands, the supervisor is conscious of controlling the depth of his/her personal involvement, thus maintaing the objectivity necessary to reflect on further changes in a professional manner. The expansion of the supervisory relationship is paralleled by the supervisee's increasing competence with and acceptance of the client(s) and the supervisee's broadened perspective about his/her professional role.

The supervisor's organization has defined a need and has set up a process for supervision which supports the supervisor's ideas and style of relating to the supervisee and permits the supervisor freedom to move with the supervisee in ways the supervisor feels are necessary to promote the supervisee's growth. The supervisor's autonomy allows for consultation with others, although the supervisor does not lean heavily on this data. Through supervision, the supervisee has increased expectations of help from and better feelings toward the organization.

Evaluation is a mutual, on-going process where agreement is reached about past and present performance and future needs. The supervisee's initial anxiety about evaluation is reduced by focusing on problems and common goals, and through the increasing trust and openness in the supervisory relationship. The supervisor encourages and reinforces the supervisee to extend positive behaviors by not judging or dwelling on negative behaviors. Evaluation then becomes incorporated into the background of the supervisory process. The supervisee is able to increase his/her proficiency in evaluating self as the experience continues.

Learning and growth are evident in the supervisor, the supervisee and the client(s). The feedback from the client(s) is positive and problems that the supervisee identified about the client(s) move towards a solution and/or understanding. The supervisee has explored and come to a fuller understanding about personal conflicts in the performance of a professional role and is consequently more proficient in using him/herself to help clients by employing behaviors and attitudes from the supervisory relationship with the client(s). The supervisee is more open and less dogmatic with the client(s), the supervisor and certain others outside of the organization. The supervisee relies more on intuition and feeling in performing a professional role and has integrated more of his/her expanded conception of self into professional practice. The relationship between the supervisee comes to resemble that of colleagues, as the supervisee becomes more autonomous. The supervisor's positive experience validates and reinforces his/her philosophy and approach to supervision. The supervisor becomes more trusting and open toward the supervisory relationship and process. He/She feels more freedom in the relationship as it deepens and as the supervisee becomes more autonomous; thus, the supervisor's initial positive judgement of the supervisee is confirmed. Operating in an automomous manner from the organization gives the supervisor satisfaction.

Discussion of Results in Relation to the Relevant Supervision Literature

The results of this study support many of the ideas in the literature on supervision in the fields of education, counseling, social work and psychotherapy. A review of these results is discussed in reference to the literature and the individual protocols as one way of determining content validity of the description. The individual protocols can be found in Squires, 1978. If moderate support can be found for the findings in the research literature, then the phenomenological research method may be said to be content validity for describing the meanings of an experience. The original protocols are quoted to give the reader a flavor of the original description of a positive supervisory experience. The quotes are labled by supervisor A, B, C and D.

The data from the present study indicate that supervision is a process which focuses on the supervisee's relationship to the client and attainment of a professional role. This is consonant with the ideas of Berman and Usery (1966), Goldhammer (1969), Cogan (1973), and Alfonso et al. (1975) who focus the supervisory process on improving the professional behaviors of the teacher. Eckstein and Wallerstein (1958) and Rutenberg (1974) also see supervision as aimed at changing the professional self and the supervisee's role as a helper with clients. Fleming and Benedek (1966)

state that the purpose of supervision is "clarification of the instrument [the supervisee]" to more effectively work with clients. Subject A's comments are illustrative, "I [the supervisor] brought up the issue of how you [the supervisee] are going to deal with this person and what are your limits, what are your boundaries, what are your responsibilities?" The focus on role clarification was present in all of the protocols; the amount of experience the supervisees had with their role did not appear to diminish this focus.

The emphasis on the supervisee's interaction with the client(s) and the supervisee's clarification of role seems to be what differentiates therapy from supervision. Thus the goals of therapy and supervision are different, as was pointed out by Wolberg (1954), Fleming and Benedek (1966), Rutenberg (1974), and Herrick (1977). Supervisor B hints at the difference,

> I [the supervisor] wanted an experience which would, this personal sharing thing, would help her over a hump, and enable her to go on. But I did not want to get into a long-term, therapy kind of experience with her, as this wasn't the agenda .... I'm not a psychiatric social worker and I don't plan to be. And God only knows I'm not a psychiatrist and I don't plan to be that either .... It's sort of a funny combination there because it's both a personal experience and it's a professional experience at the same time.

This is not to say, however, that the domain of supervision is limited only to acquisition or changing of professional behaviors as is suggested by Berman and Usery (1966), Cogan (1973), and Alfonso et al. (1975). The data suggest that the opposite is true: A change in behavior comes about through the exploration of the supervisee's conflicts, not only about role acquisition but also about personal conflicts which hamper the supervisee's effectiveness in role performance and which may be only distantly related to professional behaviors. For example, Supervisor B talks of helping the supervisee partially work through a conflicted situation with the supervisee's mother.

> So I did spend a little bit of time with her, feeling that on personal matters like this she needed that, before she could progress as a group leader; she almost had to talk

> about some of her own agendas which were interferring with her free ability to give herself in the group. In other words, I was able to drain off some of those personal concerns, or listen to them, help her make a little progress with them, so that she could give herself somewhat more clearly to the group.

This exploration of conflicts is supported in much of the psychological literature of supervision by Eckstein and Wallerstein (1958), Kell and Mueller (1966), Fleming and Benedek (1966), Wolberg (1967) and Schuster et al. (1972). It does not confirm Dussault's findings that there are no significant similarities between the conditions of therapy and inputs into the supervisory conference. Although the goals of supervision and therapy are different, significant similarities appear to exist in the process of supervision and the process of therapy.

The characteristics of the supervisory relationship as an open, honest, caring, accepting and trusting one are well documented in the literature; similar findings are evident in this study. From the literature, for example, Dussault poses five conditions from Roger's theory of therapy and personality change which are present as preconditions to a supervisee's growth in supervision: 1) the supervisor and the supervisee are in contact; 2) the supervisor is congruent in his relationship with the supervisee; 3) the supervisor experiences an unconditional positive regard toward the supervisee; 4) the supervisor experiences an empathic understanding of the supervisee's internal frame of reference; and 5) the supervisee perceives, at least to a minimal degree, the unconditional positive regard of the supervisor for him, and the empathic understanding of the supervisor. These five conditions are also evident in the data, four of which are explained further. Of particular interest is that "the supervisor experiences an unconditional positive regard toward the supervisee." The data suggest that this happens very early in the supervisory relationship. Supervisor C exemplifies this best by stating,

> But I think there is a potential for her to be a good teacher. Her dedication is unquestionable. Her organization is unquestionable....She's not where I'd like her to be, but she's come a long way....I think she's trying, I think so. I think she's sincerely trying, but it's hard.

The above quote also illustrates that the supervisor experiences an empathetic understanding of the supervisee's internal frame of reference. Additionally, the data from the study also indicate that the supervisor is able to identify parts of his/herself in the supervisee. Supervisor B is an example, "And also I have to say that I was pretty much the same way she was in many ways....So, in a way I saw myself some years previously, some of the characteristics I had, coming out in her." Finally, the supervisee is able to perceive the supervisor's unconditional positive regard and empathy. Supervisor A expressed this most clearly, "I think for me to move with them [the supervisees] like that [on a personal level] there needs to be a real trust, and a real awareness for them to kind of explore themselves." The data then support Dussault's theory that the preconditions of supervision and therapy are similar.

The presence of these preconditions does not imply that there are no anxieties or tensions present. Herrick (1977) found that anxiety was present for the supervisee at the outset of supervision, stirred up by the expectation of being judged. The data from the present study indicate the supervisor is also anxious about his/her own role performance and effectiveness in the supervisory experience. Indeed, Mueller and Kell (1972) view the supervisory relationship as one which copes with conflict to promote growth. The supervisor is able to relieve these anxious feelings by creating a comfortable atmosphere and initially providing a rather structured format for supervision. Supervisor D explains this anxiety reducing process,

> I felt anxious because the class wasn't a nice class, it wasn't a good class, and I wasn't really sure how I was going to say that...and still help her feel good about who she is. So I made a point of sitting down and organizing in my own mind...what I was going to say and what I needed to talk about with her. And, that made me feel somewhat more comfortable...It's nice to feel prepared.

Similarly, initial resistance by the supervisee is broken down as the supervisee understands the task's format and intent.

The supervisee's resistance and/or anxiety provide the key necessary for the supervisor to unlock the relationship. The supervisor is sensitive and directs attention toward the supervisee's congruence or incongruence. This confirms the findings of Fleming and Benedek, Mueller and Kell, and Schuster et al. who see supervision as a unique psychological process which focuses on conflict resolution. Supervisor A points out,

> And it seemed like a very opportune time for me to give him some personal feedback about how he was coming across to me, and how that must, in some way, be parallel to how he was coming across to the client...For me, there was a couple processes going on. One was looking at what are issues for him, concrete kinds of issues...there were the other underlying issues which I see as his own internal processes that these issues are related to, his own way of moving in the world.

Furthermore, the supervisor in positive supervision is able to suggest strategies and give examples from personal experience in a way that gives responsibility to the supervisee on what action to take. This is consistent with Rutenberg's (1974) focus on the supervisee examining his/her communication behavior without the threat of disapproval or rejection. Supervisor A explains,

> One of the things I began to have a sense of, and wanted, and I guess my feeling was, when I was doing supervision with him, would check things out with him, to try to get him to question some of the things he was doing, still leaving the responsibility to him as to how to move with his client.

Supervisor B used much the same approach, "I used my own kids as examples and let her choose to understand what she wanted to understand." Thus, there is a sharing of responsibility in the supervisory relationship as discussed by Towle (1954) and Cogan (1973).

There is also data which indicate that learning problems (the supervisee's automatic response pattern of responding to the client) and problems of learning (a characteristic and limited way of learning in supervision which represents a projection of the learning problem into the relationship with the supervisor) are also present (Eckstein and Wallerstein, 1958). There were many examples of learning problems in Supervisor C's supervisee,

> And I [the supervisor] said, "You've contacted many parents, you've talked to many parents, you've ended conversations by handing up, and been intimidated and upset. You feel many parents have been against you when they've asked you to defend some of the things you're talking about." So, once again, she said, "I guess you think I've not been doing a good job. I wish you would have told me before. Never once did you say I've not been doing a good job."

Here, the supervisee's learning problem is the way she responds to the clients. The problem about learning is the projecting of frustration into the supervisory relationship and "blaming" the supervisor for not identifying this inadequacy for her.

One of the most significant findings is that in positive supervision there is a shift from the supervisee focusing on the supervisee-client relationship to the supervisee exploring personal conflicts which impair role performance. In other words, the supervisee, in accepting this shift, focuses more on his/her personal feelings, attitudes, ideas and future. This shift is important because the supervisee is now examining his/her own presuppositions, assumptions and conflicts. The supervisory process now centers on the supervisee's beliefs and attitudes which impact on the supervisee-client relationship. It seems that it is from this examination of the supervisee's ideas that change in the supervisee's behavior can evolve; the content of supervision then expands. Supervisor A describes part of the process,

> This person is involved in a ministerial kind of counseling. It seemed like part of his own internal processes were that life was hard; it had to be a struggle; and in some ways he seemed limited as to where, because of his own perspective, he could take the client. Coming from this ministerial approach also tied in with his feeling that he had to take on so much responsibility for people, and really do this kind of saving thing, almost, he had to be the savior, rather than, again, trying to get the client to do more work on their own, and being able to mobilize the client to do that...he seemed real open to explore these things: that the issues around his role as a minister and as a counselor seemed to be a conflict for him....So it grew from the client to himself [the supervisee]. It seemed like he couldn't work with the person [the client] in that way unless he himself did some work on himself in the same way.

There seem to be four characteristics associated with this shift. First, initial problems of evaluation of the supervisee have been resolved. Second, the supervisee has experienced some success in improving his/her performance on a technical level with the client. Third, the supervisee experiences trust in the supervisor. Fourth, the pace of the disclosure is governed by the supervisee. It is difficult to determine from the data whether these are the necessary and sufficient preconditions in this shift, or whether there are other characteristics of the supervisor-supervisee relationship that also contribute. There is also the question of the extent to which each of the preconditions must be present in order for the shift to take place. For now, it is sufficient to say that these conditions are associated with, but do not necessarily contribute to the shift. This finding may give some insight into how the supervisory relationship progresses from one stage to another. For example, this shift may be necessary to reach what Horgan (1971) terms the congruent stage which is characterized by the supervisee's expectations coinciding with the supervisee's self-awareness to his/her own internal processes. The shift also seems to correspond to the beginning of Stage 3 of Gaoni and Neumann's paradigm (1974) where the supervisee develops his/her own theraputic personality.

Kell and Mueller (1966) summarize the role of the supervisor in this shift. "The objective of the supervisor is to free the counselor to be able to function effectively with his client rather than to resolve the counselor's conflicts" (p. 116). There appears to be only a shade of difference here, akin to the difference between therapy and supervision. Perhaps the difference can be further clarified by suggesting that the supervisor, while identifying and surfacing the supervisee's conflicts with the supervisee, does not intend or expect the supervisee to resolve these conflicts within the context of supervision, although from the data it appears that a significant amount of time is devoted to exploring these more personal issues. It would seem that the identification and the process of beginning to work through some of these underlying personal issues are

sufficient to bring about improved interactions with the client, without necessarily completely resolving the issues. This confirms Kell and Mueller's (1966) ideas that the supervisor is one who identifies and manages conflicts to promote growth in the supervisee. Some illustrations from the protocols are in order here. Supervisor B states, "So, I'm not really sure at this point whether this rather indirect process around the question of discipline bore any fruit. I kind of have to leave that up to her." Notice here that a conflict has been identified and worked on, but the supervisor is not sure whether the supervisee ever fully resolved this conflict. The supervisor, while helping the supervisee to pursue these conflicts, is also aware of his/her own role limitations. Supervisor B shows this awareness while discussing how the supervisee was able to use the supervisor to talk about a conflicted situation with the supervisee's mother.

> And since she needed to use me in that way, I was willing to do that. And I think we did drain a good bit of anxiety off....And I think it freed her mind from an agenda that was really getting in the way of what we were doing in supervision...So there is a lot of emotion involved in it. So I would not rule out, an almost -- it's not a therapy relationship, it's just a very strong sharing relationship on a personal level...I didn't want to get super-involved personally because I didn't think that would be particularly helpful. But I was consciously aware of how far I was going to get involved.

Notice that the supervisor's focus here is to drain off the anxiety through discussion, so that the supervisee is more effective in a role, and not to help the supervisee to resolve the conflict with the mother, although the discussion may help in this personal conflict resolution.

Wolberg (1967) and Schuster et al. (1972) stress the supervisor's function as a role model. The current findings support this conclusion. For example, Supervisor A describes this process,

> I began to be aware that in order for me to help him move, that I was going to have to do some role modeling, set kind of a stronger example for him. So I began to try to mobilize myself and become more expressive and more dynamic within the supervisory sessions, for I felt he needed to be that way himself.

The data reveal that the organization does have an effect on the practice of positive supervision, although the effect may be evident in an indirect way. The data indicate that the organization has defined a need and set up a process for supervision, that the supervisor generally works in an autonomous manner while using others in the organization as resources, and that positive supervision increases the supervisee's expectations and positive feelings toward the organization. There are, however, only tenuous links which connect the findings of this study to the literature of organizational supervision. Indeed, this study described the structure of positive one-on-one supervision; the structure of supervision in groups and in organizations may be very different as a much larger range of variables is brought into play in different ways. For example, the literature in positive supervision deals, in part, with the one-on-one interactions of the supervisor and supervisee. In organizational supervision other types of interactions are evident. The supervisor might meet with a group of supervisees and/or the supervisor might devise a system-wide plan using groups of supervisees for their input. In these cases, it might be hypothesized that the norms, sentiments, interactions and activities of the various groups would have greater effect on the group supervisory experience than in triadic supervision (Homans, 1950). In Alfonso et al.'s terms (1975), the social milieu components may have a greater effect on the supervisory process. Wilson et al. (1969) make a case for supervision perpetuating a plan orientation which indicates a need for the supervisor to foster the creative-critic's ideas and to generate consensus around those ideas in order to renew an organizational plan.

Champagne (1973) proposes a seven-step planning cycle in which individual supervision begins at Step 6 -- the planning of the individual contract. Returning to the ideas of Getzels and Guba (1958), who explain that the problem of managing organizations is to merge the nomothetic (organizational) needs with the idiographic (personal) needs, it seems that triadic supervision puts its emphasis on the former, whereas organizational supervision places its emphasis on the latter.

This conflict between individual and organizational needs is even more evident in professional organizations, where the professional is assumed to be at least partially autonomous. The findings from this study indicate that a part of the structure of positive supervision is the satisfaction the supervisor has in acting in an autonomous way from the organization. However, it is also clear that the organization has determined that supervision was to take place and, consequently, it may be inferred that supervision is a valued goal of the organization, although descriptions of how supervision came to be valued within the organization were never explained in great detail in the protocols. Therefore, the data do not reveal how the individual supervisory experience fits into an organizational plan to attain specified goals. Furthermore, the data do not describe the individual supervisory process as part of a general plan to meet specific institutional goals. Rather, the data suggest that the goals of supervision emerge from the individual supervisory experience in order to attain better performance of a specified professional role. It would seem then that the organization sets up a structure in which individual supervision is conducted, which allows the supervisor autonomy to carry out the process of supervision. Supervisor A reports,

> So, here, the system that I'm working in, I think my approach would get a lot of support from some people there; it certainly has been influential in allowing me the feel of freedom to move that way with somebody that I'm supervising.

However, there are certain components of organizational supervision identified in the literature which are similar to that of individual supervision. For example, Argyris (1970) proposes three tasks for the interventionist or supervisor: generating valid and useful information, fostering free and informed choice and generating internal commitment. These tasks are evident in individual supervision also. All of the supervisors were able to generate valid and useful information about the needs of their supervisee. Both supervisor and supervisee were able to freely choose courses of action. For example, Supervisor A states,

> I introduced some techniques....He was a little bit reluctant to get into it. It's not my approach to force somebody, but I certainly encouraged him because I thought the approach would be helpful to him....And he did get involved, and seemed very amazed at the kinds of things it was causing him to get in touch with about himself.

Internal commitment is also evident from the supervisee's response to the task.

In Argyris' terms, positive supervision is an effective intervention because it leaves the supervisee freer to solve his/her problems. Supervisor B explains,

> By the end of our eight sessions, Sally had taken over the entire group and I did very little, which is really the main agenda for me. Even by the middle of the sessions, with a considerable amount of support from me, she was able to take over. I was interested in encouraging some assertiveness on her part as a group leader. And I think I definitely accomplished that, and she took over. So I consider that really the major accomplishment. You see, really my main purpose in this is to spin her off into another group, and to have her have a successful, interesting experience the next time and to be able to help the women in the group. And I think that was definitely accomplished. She felt at home by the eighth session in leading a group by herself. In the next session she would not need me there. She took on another one of the mothers we had trained and those two mothers worked together. And she again did very nicely. That was, I think, the major accomplishemnt.

Maslow's (1968) ideas about a hierarchy of needs were also evident in the data. The supervisor, it would seem, must meet the lower level needs of the supervisee before the supervisee can become self-actualizing and grow in the supervisory experience. Supervisor C is a case in point. The supervisor had to effectively deal with the supervisee's safety and esteem needs around evaluation and professional competence before the supervisee was able to confront some of the problems she was having in other areas of her professional life. Consequently, Supervisor C was able to report, "And at first, where she started out being defensive saying, 'I guess you think I'm not doing a good job,' she ended up thanking me for the conference."

As the planning process holds an important place in organizational supervision, this section of the discussion summarizes the implications that the structure of individual supervision has for the planning process. It is clear from the data in this study that the goals of supervision emerge during the supervisory process and are dependent upon the content of the supervisory sessions. The supervisory experience centers around the supervisee's improved performance of a professional role. Wilson et al. (1969), Champagne (1974) and Alfonso et al. (1975) suggest that the planning process initially centers on the specification and assessment of organizational goals. These two approaches may appear to be incompatible as there seems to be no guarantee that the work of individual supervision will be congruent with identified needs and goals of the organization. This may be particularly true as the structure of positive supervision seems to rest, in part, on priorities and issues which emerge from the unique, idiosyncratic interaction of the supervisee and the supervisor with few explicit references to organizational plans and/or goals.

This view, however, does not take into account the function of <u>role</u> as a junction for the integration of individual supervision and organizational planning. The data from this study indicate that the learning and/or increased competence in the performance of a professional role is the central concern in individual supervision. The professional role is also in part a result of the implicit and explicit expectations of the organization as a social system and as a vehicle for accomplishing specific goals. Thus, the understanding and the ability to perform the expected role within an organizational and personal context provide the common ground for organizational and individual supervision.

Since the goals of an organization are accomplished through people performing roles, this study indicates that a key factor in the planning process is role specification. Role specification has received relatively little emphasis in the literature on organizations when compared to the space devoted to goals specification and the implementation and evaluation processes. Yet, if this analysis is correct, the specification of roles

is extremely important for both individual and organizational supervision. For example, a supervisor's understanding about a professional role is necessary if the supervisor is to help the supervisee become more effective in his/her role performance. This understanding is in part a function of the supervisor's own assumptions about effective role performance and the organization's ability to specify what performance is required to successfully accomplish the task. However, this study indicates that role attainment is not only a matter of performance, it is also a question of developing an appropriate psychological attitude towards the role. Supervisor B describes this process,

> And I pointed out to her that there is a difference between being an interested mother and involved person, and a group leader -- the difference between being a professional and an amateur, so to speak -- in that she needed to abstract herself, distance herself in the group a certain amount, and see what the group members needed. And even if she weren't that interested say, in the crying and the communication or infant stimulation, or another topic like that, that she needed to put herself into that just as thoroughly as she did the topics she was most interested in. So I think I helped her make the switch from kind of being an amateur -- going where your own interests lead you, which may be not, not narrow, but then one-sided or just two-sided, and we're looking for a many-sided group leader -- to really be able to tune in to almost any topic and almost any need of the group; which is what you have to do.

It seems then that the supervisor in an organization is in a unique position to both help plan roles and help persons adopt the performance and attitudes necessary to carry out those roles. These speculations need to be bolstered by further research into the processes of organizational supervision. The discussion now turns to the findings about learning in a positive supervisory experience.

The current findings indicate that supervision from a supervisor's viewpoint is, in part, a teaching process, as learning and growth are evident in the supervisee. This supports the findings of Eckstein and Wallerstein (1958), Fleming and Benedek (1966) and Wolbert (1967). The

supervisor is able to help the supervisee integrate both the cognitive and experiential aspects of supervision into improved role performance with the clients. This in part takes place through the supervisee's use of the supervisor as a role model described by Wolberg (1967) and Schuster et al. (1972). The supervisor is able to consciously use self as a role model. Supervisor A reports, "So I began to try to mobilize myself and become more expressive and more dynamic within the supervisory sessions, for I felt he needed to be that way."

A finding of this study which is not present in the literature is that the supervisor grows in the positive supervisory experience. The experience validates and reinforces the supervisor's approach to supervision. Supervisor B points out,

> Each time the group goes well and the women seem to take a lot of satisfaction from that, it's a learning, and a growth, and a satisfying experience for me. In general, I'd say, each one of these is a growth experience, in terms of my own competence, in terms of meeting the needs of the groups and meeting the needs of the leader I'm training. So it's a lot of growth each time.

In addition, the supervisor is able to use the positive experience in approaching other relationships. As Supervisor A says,

> And I began to feel that the person's heart was in the right place and was dedicated, and I began to form some kind of trust in that he was capable and was doing some needed work with people, and that wherever he was in his development I would just try and work with him from there, kind of assume that, or hoping that, he would make some progress or grow from whatever point he was at. I saw that happening; I saw his willingness for that to happen, which encourages me in terms of feeling acceptance. I began to formulate more feeling of acceptance for people that I work with, looking at them from whereever they are, and trying to help them grow from that point, rather than approaching it from one of criticism, of looking at someone being very, very critical and maybe negative about what they were doing.

The positive supervisory experience, then, is a cycle of reinforcing incidents. The supervisee is able to overcome problems with the client(s)

through interacting with the supervisor. The supervisor recognizes this, which reinforces and validates the supervisor's approach, enabling the supervisor and supervisee to extend supervision into more personal areas. And the cycle begins again as the supervisory relationship deepens.

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APPENDIX

Supervisor B--Positive Experience in Supervision

I: You have a positive supervisory experience in mind. What I'd like you to do is to describe that experience in as much detail as possible.

S: Are you going to need to interrupt me with questions along the way that you have?

I: Yea, I might.

S: You might. O.K.

I: When I'm not clear about something or if I wonder if it has connections to other things in the conversation, then I'll ask.

S: O.K. Sometimes I speak in a very concentrated way, so if I'm going past things you think are significant, just interrupt.

I: O.K.

S: I'm a good summarizer rather than an elaborator. I'd like to describe to you an experience with a group of young women who are fairly new mothers. They are taking part in an experience of group leading. This is under a social work egis of a community mental health center, actually two mental health centers. And the teaching part of the experience where we are teaching these women is carried on by two professional social workers. Our aim in this experience is to teach the women, of which there are usually six or eight in a learning group, the fundamentals of leading an informal discussion group with new mothers. The groups themselves will have about eight members. They're voluntary. A small fee is charged. And the idea is education and support for young mothers at a time when their lives have changed considerably and we assume that they are going to need somebody to talk to and some guidance. So the learners, the students, have recently been in the position that the group members are in now. And our idea is that they will have special sympathy and special understanding for the experience that their group members are going through. To tell you just a bit about the teaching . . .

I: O.K. Are you going to zero in on one particular person?

S: Right. First I will describe the learning experience which is similar for them all, but then I will tell you about the supervision of the one, instead of all six. I'll zero in on that.

I: O.K. Fine.

S: But the classes of course were the same for all six of them. We had an early mother-baby group out in a suburban church. And from that we picked women who seemed very capable of understanding the experience they were going through; rather introspective to a certain nature, but also very personable and able to work with people. We had distinct categories in mind for people who were able to undertake this experience. We selected them and got their o.k. and drew up a little training program, of about six weeks, to teach them both the content and the process of group leading. And our philosophy was that these women should number one, know a good bit about the period, know some of the physical and the social and the intellectual problems and changes of the period; that they should know something about group leading; and, also, that they should enjoy the experience and feel that it was a growing experience for them. It's one of our requirements because these are volunteers and they're not being paid. So we had six sessions, which we found out wasn't quite enough, to teach them all these things, (laughs) as you can imagine. Doing some dydactic teaching and mixing it with some experiential exercises, and getting a lot of discussion going as we wanted to see how the women actually could relate to the discussions. The person that I'm talking about, thinking about mainly, Sally is her name, did excellently in the class, contributed very nicely, seemed able to work with ideas and intellectual concepts.

I: Could you recall a specific instance in your class where she was able to do that.

S: She was a young mother who was very keen about the concept of breast feeding. And this was one of her major soap boxes. And she was able to give chapter and page, experience after experience, almost without any end. She had no particular distance from the subject; it was really her subject. She would give experiences plus an intellectual understanding of why this was a good procedure, and took part very thoroughly in most of the discussions. And as I say, operates quite well in an intellectual basis. Then, if that's enough of the class, that's really just the background.

I: I'm wondering, it seems that you had criteria in mind for selecting. I wonder if you could go into a little more about your processes--what you were thinking about Sally as the class progressed.

S: Well, this is approximately two years ago or more, and I've had about eighteen people since then. Let me think. What I was thinking about her actually was just about the concern that I had later on, was that she was going to be excellent intellectually. She was even rather convinced of her beliefs. But they might have to do a little bit of